

AD HOC COMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE HOUSING
Of the
Suffolk County Legislature

Minutes

A regular meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on Workforce Housing of the Suffolk County Legislature was held in the Rose Y. Caracappa Legislative Auditorium of the William H. Rogers Legislature Building, 725 Veterans Memorial Highway, Smithtown, New York, on **August 17, 2005**.

Members Present:

Legislator Jay Schneiderman • Chairman

Legislator Vivian Vilorio • Fisher • Vice • Chair

Legislator Elie Mystal

Members Not Present:

Legislator Michael Caracciolo

Also In Attendance:

Mea Knapp • Counsel to the Legislature

Dan Hickey • Aide to Presiding Officer Caracappa

Jeff Kruszyna • Aide to Legislator Schneiderman

Alexandra Sullivan • Chief Deputy Clerk/SC Legislature

Kevin Duffy • Budget Review Office

Jim Dahroug • County Executive Assistant

Marian Zucker • Director of Affordable Housing Division/ Department of Economic Development & Workforce Housing

All Other Interested Parties

Minutes Taken By:

Diana Kraus • Court Stenographer

Minutes Transcribed By:

Alison Mahoney • Court Stenographer

(* The meeting was called to order at 1:10 P.M. *)

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

All right, I'd like to call the meeting to order of the Ad Hoc Committee on Workforce Housing this 17th day of August, 2005. Please rise and join us for the Pledge of Allegiance led by my esteemed colleague, Legislator Mystal.

Salutation

Okay, do we have any yellow cards? None, okay. Does our Director of the Office of Workforce Housing, if •• I can never remember the name of it because it's changed.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

It sounds good, sounds close.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Marian Zucker, I can remember your name, if you'll step forward.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

She's your constituent, isn't she?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

She is; only the best on the east.

LEG. MYSTAL:

She's your constituent? I was beginning to like her.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

That's okay. You can come out and visit, if she'll let you.

Anything you wanted to tell us before we vote.

MS. ZUCKER:

I'm here, I'd be happy to answer any questions.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Can I have any comment on •• there is a bill that's been floating around, I think it's a Bishop bill.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Uh•huh, 1289.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

1289? I don't know if it's been changed at all, but it seemed to be in conflict with the policy that we have, or at least redundant in many ways with the policy.

MS. ZUCKER:

Redundant I think would be my word, that it doesn't •• I mean, while it's a well intentioned bill, at least from my perspective, in order to provide funds for sewage treatment facilities for workforce housing developments, it's really redundant given the expansion of the Workforce Housing Program last year to also provide for infrastructure funding. So it seemed to set up a duplicatice •• not duplicatice, a duplicate process to achieve the same end.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay, so motion to table.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Well, I'm not going to •• let's see if there's anything else. How are we doing with other programs in terms of the grant program that we modified, are we seeing some projects moving forward at this point?

Let the record reflect that the Director is crossing her fingers and smiling, hopefully.

MS. ZUCKER:

Her fingers, her toes and her legs. Yes, there are number of initiatives under way. They're not yet public, but I did have a meeting yesterday with the Town Board regarding a site in their community that they're looking at acquiring, with the County coming in hopefully half a step behind them, to purchase a site. That's not ready to be public yet, but as soon as it is, I'm

happy to report on it to this committee. I would expect •• I might even be able to be back here by the end of September on that site.

The Patchogue site continues to move forward. They are fairly far along in the very beginning planning for acquiring all of the different parcels in that site. We do have meetings at least once a month on that process and The Partnership is working with the developer. The Partnership and _Pulty_ Homes are the designated developer on that site, they're working to put together a budget. And these things just ••

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Is there anything more we can do legislatively, on a County level, that we should be doing that we're not, could be done?

MS. ZUCKER:

You know, you asked me that I think it was two months ago and it's really excellent, it's an excellent question. There's nothing that comes to mind right at this moment, but I'll consider that.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Yeah, I know a lot of this is at the local level and at the State level.

MS. ZUCKER:

It's so much about zoning and political will and the willingness to zone things appropriately. You know, we have in place I think two really strong incentive programs that are meant to stimulate the creation of workforce housing and I think, you know, there may be other things that we can think of to tweak those programs or to embellish those programs in some ways, but it's really •• it's so much •• you know, Jay, as being a local Legislator, it's so much about having the political will to stand up in a community.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

What about some State legislation?

MS. ZUCKER:

The Balboni/DiNapoli bill didn't move forward.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

No, it didn't move forward.

MS. ZUCKER:

I'm not giving •• giving up. I'm sorry, you know ••

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

But either way, on the County level, in your mind we're doing everything we need to do ••

MS. ZUCKER:

What I'd like to say to that ••

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

•• for the County not to be an obstacle and maybe be an incentive.

MS. ZUCKER:

What I'd like to say to that is you asked me that a couple of months ago and I responded off the top of my head and today also I'm responding off the top of my head, so I'd actually like to give it some consideration. I'd like to sit down and ••

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

I just want to make sure that you have the tools that you need to do everything you can to help facilitate this.

MS. ZUCKER:

I'd love the tool of zoning, can you help me with that?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

There was a bill that did that, wasn't there?

LEG. MYSTAL:

No, no, we had a bill.

MS. ZUCKER:

You know, there are more complicated ••

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

The GFA.

MS. ZUCKER:

Right. There are more complicated procedures or structures that we could think about that might make it •• you know, one of the issues now is we're still, with the Land Acquisition Program, struggling to be able to spend that money early enough on in the process of acquiring a site to really have it make a difference.

One of the things I've been thinking about and talking on an informal basis to various towns about, is there a way that we can streamline that land acquisition process when there is a town that's going to be purchasing the property as opposed to a private developer; is there a way that we could partner up and come in sooner than later? So I'm looking at trying to do that with this one example that I mentioned, hopefully I can bring that to you in September, of trying to use the existing legislation but coming in fairly early on instead of after all of the zoning approvals have taken place, after we know exactly what's going to happen on a site. If we know that a town is going to commit to us to build workforce housing, that they're going to meet our income guidelines, that they're going to meet our purchase price guidelines or rental guidelines, as long as they're meeting the program parameters of our program, what I had would like to see is us really trying to streamline the funding of that program and have some flexibility there. I think our existing program allows that this one opportunity is going to be the first place where I'm going to bring you something probably sooner than you would otherwise see if given past practices, and we'll see how that works. And if we find that we need little more flexibility, maybe one of the things we'll decide to do is to provide flexibility for that sort of a situation where it says partnering with a town rather than a private developer bringing us a piece of land to purchase.

But I would also ask that you give me the opportunity to come back to this committee and give this question a little bit more thought and see what I can come up with as recommendations.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay. Motion to table.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

We're not even there yet. So any other questions, comments?

Just a reminder that there ••

LEG. MYSTAL:

I like the lady. She's trying to do her best, it's not her fault that we're not getting anywhere with this thing, it's not her fault.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

I'd like to go to the agenda.

MS. ZUCKER:

Baby steps. You know, that's the other thing, you know, let's define •• how are we going to define success? And in some ways, you know, even having this dialogue, this interchange, you know, is a major step forward, that we're •• the issue is out there on the table, people recognize the issue, the County is doing what it can do to address the issue, and hopefully the more it gets spoken about the more it gets recognized.

LEG. MYSTAL:

I think, you know, we're being hypocritical and very •• you know my sentiment. I think we're being very hypocritical in this County. I don't think we're ever going to build enough •• not even enough, a substantial number of affordable homes because the two things •• three things are lacking, you mentioned one of them, political will; number two is zoning. Everybody says they're for affordable homes as long as it's not in their backyard, as long as it's not in their neighborhood or in their town or anyplace else, and where are we going to put them? The downtown area we keep talking about is very limited, maybe we'll build a hundred units in downtown areas, so there's nobody else here and this doesn't go anywhere; I'm glad there's nobody here for me to say it.

My frustration with it is the hypocrisy. The Legislators I think have good intention, we all have

good intention, but I think •• I don't think it will ever come to fruition. If we build 1,500 units of housing, of affordable housing in the next five years, I would be very, very surprised, for the simple reason that the places where we could build which is out east, we can't because we're buying everything and saving it because it has a blade of glass on it. The other places in the other towns we don't have any room, and that's the truth, we don't have any room to build anything in Babylon or in Huntington.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Sure you do.

LEG. MYSTAL:

Very, very little, maybe two or three hundred units, come on.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Come on.

LEG. MYSTAL:

We're talking •• you're going to pass the zoning to go up?

MS. KNAPP:

Islip does.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Can we go to the agenda?

LEG. MYSTAL:

Yeah, let's go to the agenda.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Thank you. Can we go to the agenda, Mr. Chair?

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yes, we can go to the agenda.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay, so we're going to move to the agenda.

Tabled Prime Resolutions

Resolution 1289•05 • To establish a policy to promote workforce housing in Suffolk County (Bishop). This is the Bishop bill we talked about earlier. I'm going to make a motion to table this subject to call.

Do I have a second.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

I'll second it.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay, second to table subject to call by Legislator Vilorina•Fisher. All in favor? Any opposed?

1289 is tabled subject to call

(VOTE: 3•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Caracciolo).

Resolution 1887•05 • Authorizing the sale of County•owned real property pursuant to Section 72•H of the General Municipal Law to the Town of Brookhaven for affordable housing purposes (Presiding Officer at the Request of the County Executive). I don't know if our Director of Workforce Housing wants to say anything on this.

MS. ZUCKER:

I do. I do have a question whether •• Mea, that's the right reso, IR number on it?

MS. KNAPP:

1887?

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

1887.

MS. ZUCKER:

Okay, because I tried to pull it up on the Leg home page and it said that there was no such resolution, but I do know this resolution by this or a different IR number.

MS. KNAPP:

This is the one in Gordon Heights in Coram?

MS. ZUCKER:

Yes, yes.

MS. KNAPP:

Carr Street near Homestead, yeah.

MS. ZUCKER:

Okay. This is a house, it's going to be transferred to the Town of Brookhaven and we saw a similar situation I think was two cycles ago, this is a house that's going to go to the Community Development Corporation of Long Island, they're going to renovate the house and it's going to be used for one of their Section 8 rent•to•own tenants.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Motion by Legislator ••

MS. ZUCKER:

So it's going to be a homeownership house eventually.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

•• Vilorio•Fisher, second by Legislator Mystal. All in favor?

Any opposed? ***Passed and carried (VOTE: 3•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Caracciolo).***

Resolution 1889•05 • Authorizing the sale of County•owned real property pursuant to Section 72•H of the General Municipal Law to the Town of Babylon for affordable housing purposes (SCTM No. 0100•199.00•03.00•066.000) (Presiding Officer at the Request of the County Executive). This is all ••

LEG. MYSTAL:

Same thing.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Same thing, but this is also to add to the Town of Babylon; anything different about this one?

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Is this also CDC?

MS. ZUCKER:

No, actually these, both 1889 and 1896 are vacant parcels of property in the Town of Babylon. The Town of Babylon is going to use them for their own affordable housing program, they're likely going to go to the Long Island Housing Partnership to be built for first•time home buyers.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Same motion, same second on 1889. **Approved**
(VOTE: 3•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Caracciolo).

1896•05 • Authorizing the sale of County•owned real property pursuant to Section 72
•H of the General Municipal Law to the Town of Babylon for affordable housing
purposes (SCTM No. 0100•054.00•02.00•063.00) (Presiding Officer at the Request of
the County Executive). Same motion, same second. **Approved**
(VOTE: 3•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Caracciolo).

1900•05 • Authorizing the sale of County•owned real property pursuant to Section 72
•H of the General Municipal Law to the Town of Islip for affordable housing purposes
(SCTM No. 0500•119.00•03.00•062.000) (Presiding Officer at the Request of the
County Executive). Anything on this to add?

MS. ZUCKER:

This is a house going to Islip, Town of Islip which will transfer to their Community Development

Agency. And it's likely to be renovated by one of several nonprofit groups that the CDA works with, either Central Islip Civic Corporation or the Long Island Housing Partnership.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Okay. Same motion, same second on 1900. ***Approved***
(VOTE: 3•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Caracciolo).

1932•05 • Establishing a pilot program to establish an energy use criteria for affordable housing in Suffolk County (Nowick). I've had a request from the sponsor to table one cycle. So I'll make a motion to table, second by Legislator Vilorina•Fisher.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

On the motion.

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Yes.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

Marian, I recall when I looked at the criteria when we established the TDR policy, that within that criteria there were some •• there were quite a number of elements that referred to energy use and sustainable energy, energy efficiency; is that part of our general affordable housing policy or was that •• I know that we all worked on the TDR's to try to have sustainable programs and energy efficiency so that people who could afford the housing could then afford • •

MS. ZUCKER:

To stay there.

LEG. VILORIA•FISHER:

•• to stay there, but is that currently our criteria?

MS. ZUCKER:

It's not a current criteria for funding but, you see, we are not lacking •• you know, the demand isn't there that we can get picky and choosy about what we're •• you know, "We're only going

to fund you if you provide energy efficient housing." I think that, you know, it's great idea. The question is how to implement it in such a way that it doesn't end up costing more, you know, so much more to build a house, that it layers on more and more requirements.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Well, the technology is there that it really shouldn't cost much. It should be cost effective, the upfront costs shouldn't be that much higher at this point, or even higher. There have been models of affordable energy•efficient homes that have been built for affordable housing. I believe there's a big model in Brooklyn.

LEG. MYSTAL:

In Brooklyn?

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Yeah.

MS. ZUCKER:

But in answer to your question ••

LEG. MYSTAL:

Well, I mean, that's nearby. We don't have any big affordable housing projects here to use as a model.

MS. ZUCKER:

But in answer to your question, it's not a funding requirement, it's not something that I require in order to provide funding for a project.

LEG. VILORIA • FISHER:

Okay. But we do have it as part of our TDR because we •• that has to do with the environmental impact of sterilizing one piece of property and then using the transfer of developments rights for affordable housing, we want to make sure that that's as efficient as possible. Thank you.

MS. ZUCKER:

(Shook head yes)

CHAIRMAN SCHNEIDERMAN:

Right. I'm not going to ask you to comment on this bill since we're going to table it, so maybe at some future time. So there is motion and a second to table. All in favor? Any opposed?

1932 is tabled (VOTE: 3•0•0•1 Not Present: Legislator Caracciolo).

And that's concludes our agenda. We are adjourned.

(*The meeting was adjourned at 1:27 P.M.*)

Legislator Jay Schneiderman, Chairman

Ad Hoc Committee on Workforce Housing